Facing Realities

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HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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A STATE LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

(1)

The principal languages of India, apart from the dialects, are Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannad, Oriya and Assami. Each is the written and the literary language of a large number of people and is prevalent in pretty large areas in the country. Of these Hindi in its various styles of Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani is the most widely prevalent. The question has been raised as to what should be the language in which the governmental and administrative work of the Union Government of India should be carried on. It has been accepted as a self-evident proposition that one such language is necessary. At the same time there is also a desire that each of these languages should be the offi- l language within the area where it is prevalent. Eac.. area will thus have two languages to deal with — one for its local or provincial purposes and the other for all India purposes unless the language that is chosen for all India purposes happens also to be the language of that particular area. While the desire to have a common language for all India administrative purposes and another language for provincial purposes appears to be natural, the implications of such a desire are not always fully visualized.

The problem is not a new one. It has arisen in the past. There was a time when Sanskrit was used for all India purposes throughout the country although it was not language of the common people, but only studied by the select few. Not only were poetry and belles-lettres written in that language but also all serious works on philosophy, medicine, engineering, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences were written in that language by every author who aspired to have an all India appeal. Law books were also written in Sanskrit. Sanskrit was of course the vehicle for sacred literature. I do not know if there ever was a conflict between Sanskrit on the one side and any of the provincial languages which all appear to have derived not only a great deal of the ideas but also of their vocabularies from that source, although it was naturally to a lesser extent in the South where the languages have an altogether different source than in the north and west where provincial languages are said to have very largely been drawn or derived from it.

When the Muslims came to India and became its rulers, they used their own language for governmental and administrative purposes but otherwise they let Sanskrit and provincial languages alone. The language of Islam is Arabic. It is the language of the Holy *Quran*, the Hadis and a great part of the religious lore of the early Muslims. But Arabic was not the language of the Muslim rulers of India who adopted Persian as they were more familiar with it than with Arabic. Arabic in India thus has remained more a language of the learned priests and *alims* rather than of Muslims as a body. Persian became the court language and was for that purpose studied on an extensive scale not only by the Indians who had embraced Islam but by Hindus also. The Persian language and literature have of course been very largely influenced by the Arabic language and literature but so far as India was concerned, it was more Persian than Arabic which was adopted. Persian had become so prevalent that it was adopted as the official language for administrative purposes even by a large section of ordinary people just as we see today many Indians carrying on their private business in English. I have seen the accounts and records of some zamindars kept in Persian language till so late as the nineties of the last century.

When the English came they used their own language for administrative purposes and gradually replaced Persian by English and all those classes that had used Persian during the Muslim period and had continued to use it by sheer intertia till many years after the British rule had been established also gradually displaced Persian and adopted English in its place. The result has been that English has now been accepted for some years past as the language not only for governmental and administrative purposes but also by business firms and others. This was inevitable because ever since English was adopted as the medium of instruction it has gone on spreading until it became the medium not only for all higher education in the universities but also in lower forms of schools. Only during recent years when the national movement grew and gained strength that Indian languages began to be considered as media of instruction in schools and today serveral universities have decided to adopt them although no university has yet completely done so.

What the Muslim rulers or the English did in India is what has been done everywhere all the world over when one nation has conquered another or established its rule over another country. Now

that foreign rule has ceased, the desire has naturally been expressed that all our transactions should be in our own language. But as I have said above there are several languages prevalent in different parts of the country and it is necessary, therefore, to have one language for all India purposes. There is no question of forcing any language of any one part of the country on others and thus establishing a sort of linguistic imperialism any more than there is any question of establishing or enforcing a government or administration on any part of the country not acceptable to it. It is here that the difference arises between the common language that will be now accepted by the country as a whole on the one hand and Persian or English on the other. The common language of today will be voluntarily accepted as such by those people and those parts whose language it is not, whereas, there was no choice left to the people when the Muslim rulers imposed Persian and the British the English language. But once this point is fully grasped, it will not be difficult to understand its implications in the context of modern conditions. When communication was difficult and quick movement impossible, the necessity of a common language was not so great or easily seen but modern conditions and means of transport and communications have changed the face of things so much that it becomes very difficult now to keep any part of the country aloof from any other part. The Hindu law gave to local customs the same sanctity and sanction as to the *smritis*. That was because each area or community grew more or less independently in its own way, of course influenced but not always limited and determined by any overriding law. We have thus an infinite variety of customs which do not, however, destroy but only illumine and beautify the overall unity. The position today is that not only on account of modern conditions but also as a result of the British rule we have great deal of law that is common to the whole country. The legislation during the last hundred years or more having been all in English language in all the provinces and many of the States also, is understood and where necessary, studied by lawyers all over the country. The judgments of High Courts being all in English are studied, cited and referred to even when not followed by all other High Courts. So also the proceedings of the legislatures of various provinces being largely in English are available to other provinces just as the proceedings of the Central Legislature. The question arises that if we adopt one language for the Union Governmental and administrative purposes and each linguistic area is to have its Governmental and administrative work carried on in its own language, where we shall draw the line. If legislation in each province is to be in the language of that province then every other province is deprived of the advantage and opportunities of knowing it just as that province is unable to profit by similar legislation in other linguistic areas. The court language of each linguistic area will naturally be the language of that area and therefore the judgments of its High Court will not be available for citation before other High Courts just as its High Court will not be able to derive any benefit from the precedents of other High Courts. What will be the language of the Supreme Court? That will, I presume, be the all India common language. How will the Supreme Court decide appeals against judgments written in different languages? Its judges may not be expected to know ordinarily more than two languages — one of the area to which they belong and the other the common language of India. Will they then go by translation of decisions appealed against? It very often happens in the Final Court of appeal that a judgment appealed against is the last of a series of decisions on a point of law extending over many years and it has happened in the past and it may happen in the future that such a decision is upset thus upsetting the authority of the whole series of decisions. How are the lawyers and judges in the District Courts and in the Provincial High Courts to keep themselves in touch with the latest decisions of the Supreme Court? All these questions can be answered only in one way and that is that the administrators, lawyers and judges not only in the Central Government, Supreme Court, the provincial Governments and the provincial High Courts but also lower down and members of legislatures should be acquainted with at least the all India common language sufficiently to enable them to carry out their duties. It follows that the common language will have to be studied by a large body of persons and if democracy has to function successfully, it should be as widespread as possible if not coterminous with entire population of the country. It follows that apart from cultural purposes the use of the common language will have to grow more and more.

Let us look at the same question from another point of view. Are our universities which are not unnaturally adopting provincial languages as media of instruction within their respective jurisdictions to grow independently of each other without any intercourse and without any relationship? In what language are our Research Journals to be published? Are they to be in our provincial languages or in the common language? If the former, how are the students, teachers and research workers in other linguistic areas to profit by the work done in one area unless they know the various languages? If they are to be in the common language, then all the research workers must possess a pretty high standard of proficiency in that language. How is that proficiency to be attained unless the common language is studied with diligence and its study holds out prospects of preferment? The English language has been studied with great success in India because proficiency in that language was a *sina gua non* for material success in every department of life during the British rule.

Any attempt to reconcile conflicting claims is always a difficult task but it has to be faced. Here we have to reconcile the claims of linguistic areas

and all India and if we once concede, as it is accepted by all the different units, that India has to be maintained as one single unit, the claims of all India have to be admitted. If that requires a curtailment of what are considered to be the rights of particular regions and areas, that has to be put up with. For political puposes this has been accepted and not only in the Draft Constitution but also in the existing Constitution Act of 1935, the fields of the Centre and the Provinces are meticulously defined and limited. In matters of overriding importance the Centre's supreme position is whole-heartedly accepted. So it must be in the case of the common language also. Its limitations may be defined but that it has a wide field to cover cannot be denied. It necessarily follows that the system of education should also be so revised as to fit in with this purpose.

29-11-1948 RAJENDRA PRASAD

(To be continued)

SHRI VINOBA AT RAJGHAT — XII

The following is a brief report of one of the speeches of Shri Vinoba delivered on Friday, 1-10-'48 during the Gandhi fortnight:

He had on the previous day, said Vinobaji, drawn the attention of his audience to the condition of Indian labour *vis-a-vis* the charkha. That day, he wanted to say a thing or two about Harijans. He had received that day a telegram from Bikaner, where too, they had been celebrating the Gandhi Jayanti. The telegram disclosed that some workers had taken part in cleaning and sweeping Harijan localities as a part of the Jayanti programme. This act had been regarded by some leading members of the society as an offence, and they had passed an order forbidding them from visiting the local temple. The friends thus penalized had gone on a fast in protest. Shri Vinoba wanted the audience to imagine what amount of agony the attitude adopted by the *savarnas* would cause to Gandhiji's soul, who had tried all his life to become a Harijan and prayed to be born the humblest among them if he must be born again.

Shri Vinoba reminded the audience of one of his previous post-prayers speeches, in which he had said that in the North, they had not carried on temple-entry agitation as in the Madras province. His statement was at the time challenged in the Press. The Bikaner incident justified his statement. In allowing Harijans, who were their own kith and kin, to the temples, the *savarnas* conferred no boon on the former, but simply atoned for their sin of having forcibly kept God's devotees away from Him.

The opening of temples to Harijans was by no means full atonement. He had been asked by Harijans, if he would be satisfied with their mere entry to the temples. Shri Vinoba's reply was that he looked upon the temple-entry only as an earnest of the caste Hindus' pledge before God not to rest till they had placed their Harijan brethren on the same level as themselves in all matters. Justice could not be expected to be done in other matters if even temple-entry was not effected. Vinobaji desired to exemplify his remarks by an instance nearer at home. As they were aware, he was staying in the Bhangi Colony at New Delhi. A visitor looking from outside would see it surrounded by an imposing wall on all sides. But within the walls there was so much congestion and filth that life was intolerable. The *bhangis* had complained about it and put up their demands, but till then little had been done to meet them. That was the plight of Delhi — the Capital of India and of a Harijan locality where Gandhiji himself had stayed for a long time!

Shri Vinoba referred to a recent visit of Shri Jagjivan Ram, India's Labour Minister, to the Bhangi Colony. The Minister had exhorted the Harijans to rely for their elevation upon their own efforts. He had also advised them to give up the occupation of scavenging. Shri Vinoba had supported that advice. He had done scavenging work himself for years. But that was in villages. He doubted if he could do it in a city. The gutters and the lavatories and the filth of cities was unbearable.

If people were to live with Harijans and work with them, they would know where the shoe pinched. Instead people were content to throw a few crumbs at them. That was insult added to injury. He recalled an incident in which a rich man, on having escaped some misfortune, wanted to entertain a number of refugees with a feast. The latter told him they did not need his rich dishes. If he wished to help them he had better take charge of a number of orphans who were there in their midst. But the rich man was not prepared for that. The refugees declined his invitation. Shri Vinoba considered the refusal to be proper and correct. The people's behaviour towards the Harijans was similar. If they gave them food it was only the leavings! And all that happened in free India! It was no wonder that the South African Whites adopted a similar attitude towards Indians there. People must go and live among Harijans and have personal experience of their plight. Then alone would they have identified themselves with them and then alone would they be able to serve them in the real sense.

Vinobaji, after addressing the meeting, left for Jaipur to lay the foundation-stone of Gandhi Nagar.

D. M.

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

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FACING REALITIES

Our great Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, has always emphasized the necessity of facing "realities", and I agree with him. When people with different outlooks and aims meet together with a strong urge to find a solution, they all intuitively begin to face realities. When faced with realities it not infrequently happens that a great revolution, in practical terms, achieves no more than a change of hands. In the initial stages, there are some apparent reforms which appear to be radical; but when things settle down, there is not so much of "the old order changeth giving place to new".

The reason is that there are two sides of facing realities, namely, physical realities and moral realities. And when we look only to physical realities to the neglect of the moral realities, revolutions or change of parties achieve nothing substantial in the long run. It is only when we face the moral realities also, that we are able to bring about a lasting change in the order.

Another reason for the persistence of the old order consists in two kinds of the spirit of the people trying to face the realities. When we face hard realities, and our spirit withers in the face of difficulties and we feel like the inevitableness of surrendering to them, then shall only the old order persist. It will establish itself in spite of our unwillingness and pangs of conscience. But if the harder the adverse realities, the stronger gets our will to overcome them, particularly when the physical realities are in opposition to the moral realities of the situation, then the only concession which we would make to the physical realities would be what necessitated for achieving the moral end by non-violent and pure means and for allowing the parties to be deprived of their profits an opportunity to adjust themselves to the new situation smoothly and equitably.

Let me illustrate my thesis. Take for instance, the question of *Vanaspati*. The physical realities are that great influential parties are interested in the continuance of that trade; that there is also a section of people who will willingly (though however foolishly) accept it in the absence of ghee; not only that, but the armies might even resent its substitution by even purified odourless oil, though healthier and cheaper. On the other hand stands the great moral reality, that it is an immoral trade in the sense that its capacity to give a large profit is mainly due to its use as an adulterant with genuine ghee. The trade has become a veritable teacher of fraud and dishonesty. It has lowered the moral sense to even a greater degree than drink, and adultery, for it has degraded even those, who will neither drink nor commit adultery, maybe not even smoke or take tea. This is a great moral reality which faces us, and to surrender to the physical realities is to succumb to them. Facing a reality does not involve abject surrender to it like a defeated army. It means seeking a strategy to overcome it in a practical, non-violent but sure way, so that morality is encouraged and not fraud and dishonesty. The moral loss to the nation is a greater calamity than the economic loss of a particular trade, or the tastes of some consumers.

The same remarks apply to the control policy. Physical realities might be conflicting on both sides; one set of hard facts might be favourable for a regime of controls; another for that of lifting them. What shall guide us in making our choice? My humble submission is that the moral realities must be allowed to guide us. And there is little doubt that on the moral side, the controls act only as a demoralizing agent in India. Far from controlling, they encourage all sorts of dishonest and fraudulent practices and compel even honest people to lower their standard of honourable conduct and faithful service. A person is not a good citizen merely by the fact that he does not deceive or pay bribe or *babshis*, does not himself adulterate articles or delivers less than the due measure, or charge black-market price, or does not purchase in the black-market, if by reason of the very policy and administration of controls, he adopts the policy of maintaining silence at the dishonest acts of his co-citizens, colleagues or superiors. And not a few clerks and *gumastas* and neighbours have to be unwilling tools or witnesses of dishonesty, or recipients of articles and moneys tainted with such practices. The system is incapable of helping the growth of a moral sense in the citizen, and the longer it is maintained the greater are the number of people who unconsciously and by slow degrees become accustomed to a lower grade of moral sensibility. The rising generations have already begun to accept dishonesty as a usage of society, in the same way as a child in a vegetarian home accepts vegetarianism as such and one in a meat-eater's home accepts that to be so.

The debasing influence of controls can be illustrated by a number of specific instances. At another place in these columns, a couple of them have been mentioned. They show that when morals are already at a low level, and the courage to resist an irregular expectation of a superior is lacking, controls are a curse to the nation. We must face the moral realities. More than even the food shortage and lack of industrial development is the moral shortage, and in devising controls or encouraging industries, greatest importance should be attached and place of honour should be given to the moral effect on the nation, and even while they are maintained, means and methods should be explored of ending them as quickly as possible.

Bombay 23-11-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

DEBASING EFFECTS OF CONTROLS

A correspondent writes:

"I am a cultivator myself and also a social worker. My co-workers, co-peasants and myself feel that the regime of controls sought to be re-imposed after it was lifted in pursuance of Bapu's incessant efforts is highly demoralizing. It is lowering the standard of honesty and duties of citizenship. Let me give an instance:

"Other day a cultivator of my village went to the Control Office to declare the names and other particulars of the members of his family to take a permit for storing the necessary quantity of grains etc. Among other things, he declared the age of his child to be nine years. I knew that it was only six. I asked him that since the boy was not yet sent to the school, how could he mention the age to be nine? He said that the boy appeared younger than his age on account of ill health. Now this was all bunkum. The fact was that the food quota of a child of nine years is greater than that of one of six by 3 maunds and 24 seers per annum; and he wanted to store more food than that allowed by the control rules, that allowed by the rules being certainly less than what is necessary for a hard working peasant. A peasant's monthly requirements are certainly more than 30 seers for a male and 22½ seers for a female, and a grower of food cannot but seek ways of defeating rules which do not allow him to have his full meal, while he has food in his granary."

There are also a number of dishonest and fraudulent practices associated with ration officers themselves. For instance, at various places, instead of being weighed out, the grain is measured out, because it allows marginal saving for the shop; *gur* is so weighed that something sticks to the scale pan; a similar trick is played with sugar; even adulteration, I am told, is practised.

Now it may be contended that even if all these complaints are absolutely true, they have all existed even before controls; that none of them are inventions of the control office; if, at all, they have been copied from what existed in the market. True. But the difference lies in this: when there is no control, the customer has the choice of selecting his dealer, of the quality and quantity of his articles, and also of negotiating the price. Then it is easier to complain against a private dealer than against government officers. The controls make it a monopoly trade, in which there are all controls on the purchaser and none on the seller. Even with stock in hand, the rationing clerk has been found turning away the purchasers with the answer that the stock has been exhausted and they should come on the next distributing day. With an insistent and not to be easily deceived purchaser, he somehow seeks a quantity sufficient for him. Later he confesses that he had some stock, but it was needed for a particular officer or influential individual and pleads his helplessness because of orders.

Bombay, 25-11-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

AKHIL BHARAT SARVA SEVA SANGH

In an article that was published in the *Harijan* of the 15th of February last Gandhiji had expressed a wish that the Congress should turn itself into a Lok Seva Sangh now that the political activity of the past has resulted in a measure of independence and that it should now work in the constructive field to bring Swaraj to the masses in terms of self-sufficiency of the villages. Such a change of policy and constitution was not acceptable to the Congress.

To give effect to Gandhiji's wishes and to co-ordinate the work of all the institutions which have drawn their inspiration from him, the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh has been formed. It consists of one representative each from ten constructive bodies and five co-opted members made up as follows:

1. Shri Dhiren Muzumdar, Akhil Bharat Charkha Sangh,
2. „ J. C. Kumarappa, Akhil Bharat Gram Udyog Sangh,
3. „ Radhakrishna Bajaj, Goseva Sangh,
4. „ E. W. Aryanayakam, Hindustani Talimi Sangh,
5. „ Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Hindustani Prachar Sabha,
6. „ Jivanji D. Desai, Navajivan Karyalaya,
7. „ A. V. Thakkar, Harijan Sevak Sangh,
8. „ Laxmidas Shrikant, The Western India Adivasi Workers Federation,
9. „ Gulzarilal Nanda, Hindustan Mazdoor Sabha,
10. Dr. Dinshaw Mehta, The Nature Cure Trust.
11. Shri Krishnadas Gandhi Co-opted
12. Acharya J. B. Kripalani „
13. Shri R. R. Keithan „
14. „ N. Ramaswamy „
15. „ Vallabhbhai Patel „

At their meeting held at Maganvadi, Wardha, on the 14th and 15th of November a Constitution has been drawn up. Shri Vallabhbhai Patel was elected one of the Secretaries and Shri Radhakrishna Bajaj was elected Treasurer.

To draw up a programme of work a committee consisting of Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, Shri Radhakrishna Bajaj, Shri Krishnadas Gandhi and. Shri J C. Kumarappa was appointed.

The Sangh, by its constitution is establishing new precedents. It is to have no permanent president but each meeting will elect its own chairman to conduct business. At the discussion on the subject there were two points of view clearly represented. One felt that a strong president will enable the Sangh to direct its activity in a clear cut channel and attain good results. The other point of view was that a president is no doubt an asset in getting through a definite programme but he often overshadows the younger men and hinders their development. Even at the cost of some efficiency and the risk of making mistakes, it was thought, it is necessary to give

opportunities of development to the younger generation if we aim at educating leadership. Accordingly it was decided to select office-bearers also from amongst the younger set of constructive workers.

While this Sangh will advise and guide the other constructive bodies it will not infringe on their administrative autonomy. It will draw on them for technical skill and establish its own centres which will initiate work in all departments of constructive work as indicated by Gandhiji.

We wish this Sangh god-speed in their onerous undertaking. They will need all our goodwill and co-operation. Persons who wish to help financially may send their gifts to the Treasurer, Radhakrishna Bajaj, Gopuri, Nalwadi, P. O. (Via Wardha, C. P.).

J. C. KUMARAPPA

WHY DO WE PAY TAXES?

Government is but an agent for the people to enable them to carry on their business in a better way than they themselves can. There is no purpose in keeping up a government if the people can manage better without it.

Taxes are paid to government to enable them to function for this particular purpose. The obligation to pay taxes carries with it the right to hope that the government will function for the people. On the government side, on the other hand, the right to collect taxes carries with it an obligation to spend them for the benefit of the taxpayer.

Under the imperialistic regime, obligations to the people did not receive due consideration. But now that we have governments which claim to be popular, they should serve the interests of the people.

For instance, for the farmer, government should supply water, stop erosion, disseminate weather forecasts and render other facilities for the production and distribution of commodities. If plantains are to be grown, if necessary, government should have agencies properly arranged to make available saplings to the growers and so on all along the line.

So, in the case of village industries, government should render similar help in production and distribution, and should also, as much as possible, become a consumer. Only by these means can a government help functionally the economic life of the people. If paper is made by villagers, the raw material should be made available and the paper so made should be patronized by government offices.

It is for these functions that the people are prepared to share part of their income with the government. This is really the purpose of public finance. A government that does not render these services to the people has no moral justification to collect taxes, nor is there any moral obligation on the citizen to pay taxes. The citizen is entitled to ask what the government has done in return for the taxes he pays.

In many provinces sales tax has been imposed on cottage industry products, though government renders no help to them and in preference to such products, uses foreign or mill made goods. When a government does not use hand made paper and renders no other help in the manufacture of the paper, it can have no right to collect the sales tax on the sale of hand made paper. If it does, it is both immoral and an impediment to the economic life of the people.

Even as regards public service, the villages get only a raw deal. The police cluster round the ministers like flies on dirt but they are never to be found in rural places or small towns to protect the people or to prevent crime. The police are not the paid servants of the ministers. They are there to protect the public and are paid out of public funds. Their greater duty lies in serving their true masters — the taxpayers — and not in hanging round their colleagues — the ministers.

We hope with the awakening consciousness of the citizens these required adjustments in a democracy will soon be made and government will begin to function as a helper of the people rather than as a parasite on the production of the masses. Until such time as the expenditure of governments represents the fact that they are conscious of their great responsibilities and are striving to carry them out, it would be but proper to exempt all cottage and village industries from the imposition of sales tax unless government feel it their duty to suppress these industries to extinction. In all conscience, these have been neglected long enough and have been sponged upon during the British regime. Are we not entitled to relief under governments run by our own nationals?

J. C. KUMARAPPA

EARTH HOUSES—IV

It is better to have the same composition of soil for the entire building. The volume of rammed earth work to be done should be calculated beforehand. For every cubic foot of rammed work 2 cubic feet of loose earth or 1½ cubic feet of compact soil (*in situ*) should be made ready. The dug up soil should be broken up and preferably screened through a 1" mesh strong iron sieve, wire net or expanded metal. Screening is necessary when the soil contains big pebbles, or hard and dry lumps, difficult to moisten. After screening, sand and gravel are added, if required, then the entire thing is spread in a layer about 3-4 inches thick and moistened with a watering can, giving a fine spray. After moistening the earth is mixed up again, arranged in a heap and covered up with some waterproof cloth or with moist gunny bags and allowed to remain so for a few hours or overnight.

Rammed earth is heavy and bulky and therefore the soil should be found as near the building site, as possible. When a single house is built, the soil can be taken from the refuse and the latrine pits, etc. When laying out and building big colonies, the transport of soil should be as much as possible avoided. The simplest way of getting abundant and handy supply of earth is to sink the roads and lanes 3-6 feet below the ground and to use the

excavated soil for building the houses. This procedure has several advantages: good drainage of the building sites, elevated position of the houses, reduction of the cost of fencing, nearness of the soil excavation to the building site etc.

The cost of the rammed earth wall depends almost entirely on the cost of labour and on the skill it has acquired. Rammed earth is ideal for a family house, when free labour is available. Then there is no cheaper way of building.

When the work has to be done by contractors or departmentally, careful planning of the movement and handling of the material and moulds is essential, as the advantages of a free raw material can be easily lost.

Let us turn now to the description of tools used in the rammed earth work. They are of the simplest design and can be easily prepared in a village, by the local craftsmen and out of local materials, except iron. The tools consist of moulds to ram the earth in and of rammers to ram the earth with.

The traditional rammer had a V edge, 60 to 120° and it was argued, that due to the wedge a lateral pressure is exerted, which makes the material fill the mould more closely. Experience has proved, that even better results have been obtained with flat rammers, provided there is at least 2 lbs. of weight behind each square inch of flat surface. Cast iron or iron cubes 3 x 3 x 3 inches, fitted with a wooden handle 1½" diameter and 6 feet long will be just right. Such rammers will weigh about 15 lbs. Whenever iron is not available, a hard wood shaft, cut at one end 3" x 3" square and shod with iron will serve the purpose, provided the weight is sufficient.

A 15 lbs. rammer should be lifted to the level of one's knees and let fall. It is very important to strike hard and uniformly, to avoid soft pockets. All neglect in ramming will result in a very poor wall, while conscientious work will result in a wall of spectacular hardness and tenacity.

MAURICE FRYDMAN

NOTES

What Is the Village?

During the debate on the draft constitution Dr. Ambedkar's reply to this question was "a sink of localism and a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism". Partially, of course, this may be true, just as to the question "What is Gandhiji"? the answer "He is dust and ashes strewn in innumerable rivers" may be! But is this the whole truth? Or does it even represent a substantial part of it? In fact from a certain valuation of life and living we may hold these answers to be bare misrepresentations.

The village used to be an economic unit and the real producer of wealth by man's co-operation with Nature. By our mad rush for everything Western we have interfered with the composition of this unit which has affected its nature and productive capacity.

The whole of a nation's culture derives its inspiration from village life. India today is what she is because of our neglect of our villages. We cannot blame the villages for our shortcomings. We can only make amends for the past by turning our attention to villages.

As long as the villages are left in the unenviable conditions we find them in today, there can be no hope for our country as our foundations will remain rotten. The village is the unitary organism of the body politic and its state of health will affect the whole nation. It is the training ground of our future statesman. It is the hand that feeds the nation economically. If it is to make its valuable contribution to the rebuilding of our nation, it must be restored to its pristine glory and function. It must remain an integral unit of our political, economic and social life.

Cost of Living

A Globe agency message tells us that the cost of living in India is 80 per cent higher than in the U. K., 110 per cent higher than in the U. S. A. and 150 per cent higher than Canada.

India, generally speaking, is an agricultural country that produces most of its requirements of food. Lately it has been importing about 6 per cent from outside. The United Kingdom imports about 60 per cent of its food articles. Yet its cost of living is so much lower! Does this not indicate gross mismanagement at Government level which calls for a searching enquiry?

Rural Development in C. P. and Berar

The Government of C. P. and Berar are considering opening a few Rural Development Centres. To decide on these it is necessary to take into account the willingness or otherwise of the villagers concerned. To ascertain the attitude of the villagers a Committee of the Rural Development Board consisting of Shri A. M. Makade, Minister for Rural Development, Shri R. K. Patil, Minister for Food, Beohar Rajendra Singh and Shri J. C. Kumarappa toured from the 5th to 10th November. They explained to the villagers, gathered from 10 to 15 villages round about each of the four suggested centres, what this scheme meant, how they will have to co-operate subordinating their individual interests to the common good, and cultivate their lands according to plan, calculated to provide a balanced diet to the people of the selected region and how their dealings will have to be made through a well-organized Multi-purpose Society.

Even though the assembled villagers in their hundreds, evinced considerable interest and were agreeable to launch on this scheme the committee advised them to go back to their own villages and discuss the whole matter with their fellow farmers and elders and then report their conclusions. Local regional committees with representatives from the villages concerned were formed to carry on the consultative work.

J. C. K.

A TERRIBLE TYPHOON

Bombay experienced for about twenty hours from Sunday (21st November) night to Monday afternoon a typhoon, which is said to have broken all previous records of its terrible intensity. Details are still lacking of the loss of life and property caused by it in Bombay and abroad. The hard experiences of that night and the following day, which people whose shelters were made uninhabitable or destroyed, suffered, can be described only by those who went through them. A good many of these will never be known by the world. Perhaps the hardest lot was of the people in the refugee camps. It might seem that they were ordained to pass through over and over again the bitter days of their drive out from Pakistan, as if Nature did not wish to be less cruel to them than the authors of ideologies responsible for uprooting them from their ancestral homes.

Compared to the permanent loss and afflictions suffered by many, the temporary suspension of all traffic, communications, and non-availability of milk, food, light etc. might be regarded as very trivial discomforts. They may well be dismissed like letters 'read and filed'. Even the more permanent loss to life and property will in course of time become a memory of the past, and people will somehow readjust themselves to the changed conditions in as best a manner as possible. More terrible catastrophes than these have been so suffered and forgotten by man.

What is really important and lasting is the effects which such calamities have upon the conduct and character of men coming under their influence. The type of energy which they generate, the nature of emotions, passions and sentiments which they raise, the kind of activities which they stimulate, and the permanent impression which they make upon men's minds — individually as well as corporately — are the more substantial items of human culture. On whether a great calamity enthrones God or Satan in men's hearts depends whether men, individually and socially, stand to lose or gain by it.

Thus, the rapidity and energy with which Bombay tried to restore order in the great derangement created by the storm stands to its permanent credit. The quick removal of large trees, boulders and debris from the roads and making them passable, the reparation of electric cords of tramways, railways and lights and putting much of them in working condition by Tuesday, the rescue of men entrapped in the sea, or under trees or debris, and the commencement of these activities while the storm was still furious is a display of human energy, valour and activity of a highly creditable type.

The various civil and military services of Bombay, their officers and staff deserve our warm congratulations for the work done by them. So also deserve to be congratulated those men and women, in private life, whose spirit for service stimulated them to leave their own comfortable homes while the storm was still raging, or immediately on its getting mild, to seek out people from their delapidated or water-filled houses and provide them with safer shelters and meals. I understand that at one of the suburbs of Bombay, a band of women workers collected food from house to house and distributed it among about 1500 poor on Monday and Tuesday. Similar good acts must have been done by others also at other places. It is immaterial whether they have been taken public notice of or not. It is sufficient for one's own moral development and satisfaction and for human evolution to know and feel that they took part in an activity worthy of a human being. The experience of gratification and contentment is its own reward.

On the other hand, there are those whom such universal calamities lay low. An evil urge impels them to acts of self-aggrandizement in the midst of adversity all round. They regard it as an opportunity for committing house-breaking and theft, or charging exorbitant prices of articles badly needed by everyone at such time —, say, candles or foodstuffs. The stimulus to such anti-social propensities must be reckoned among the list of more permanent loss to human culture. It develops a character in which the desire for wealth and material happiness and comforts is so supreme that it declares:

हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ।

"We shall slay our elders and superiors here and enjoy health and happiness stained with their blood."

It is the Devil's urge, ruinous and ultimately detrimental to themselves, and always injurious to society.

There are two courses from which man might choose when there is wide-spread prosperity or adversity. In the enjoyment of happiness, he might choose to allow others to precede him by placing himself at the back of all, and in adversity to throw himself in the forefront saving others as much as possible. This is Godwardness — Goodness — Humanity. The contrary way is, in the enjoyment of happiness to elbow out others and push oneself in the forefront, and in adversity to save oneself and even profit by the unhappiness of others. This is the way of the Devil. All honour and salutations to those who even in face of adversity keep steady Godward.

Bombay, 24-11-'48 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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